



Another year has passed amazingly quickly, but what a last year its been for us and thankfully it will soon be over and the start of a new year.

As you are probably all aware, Chris has spent most of this year travelling between our home near Bath and his father's in Essex. His father was complaining of neck pains over Christmas and at the start of the year underwent extensive tests, which eventually revealed that he had lung cancer (despite being an avid anti smoker all his life). Sadly before it could be operated on it was found that he also had cancer in his bones and brain. After a short fight against the disease he died at home on 26 April.

He'd been married to Jean for less than 18 months and she'd never been married before. As you can therefore imagine she has taken this hard and since then has suffered a number of strokes, the most recent leading to her being in hospital since 20 August. At the time of writing this letter in early December it is unclear whether she will be discharged before Christmas. Chris has therefore continued almost weekly trips to Essex throughout the whole year!

So moving on to happier news, this is what the kids have been up to this year. Stephanie (26) is now in her 5<sup>th</sup> year of teaching and has just moved from looking after a Reception Class to looking after Year 1, still at Summerhill Infant School in Bristol. She's thoroughly enjoys it and still gets a huge buzz from seeing the children develop significantly during their year with "Miss Essex". She's now been with "Tux" for over 8 years and we see a lot of them as they bought a house in the same road as us in 2009.

Samantha (24) graduated from university with a degree in Interior Design but has found it difficult to get work in this field. Fortunately she's been able to continue working at Saltford Golf Club for a regular income. At the start of the year Chris and Samantha bought a development property for her to do up and this is currently in the process of being sold, before moving on to another one. She's been going out with Neil for about 14 months and they've just returned from a holiday in Egypt.

Lastly there's Michael (21) who is in his final year at UWIC (Cardiff) studying Marketing. When he's not in the local bars he is enjoying the course and comes home most weekends to continue playing football for Saltford (and to get his washing done!!).

Eryl continues to enjoy her role as an Avon lady. She also looks after a baby on a Wednesday, for one of the neighbours.

Chris when he's not travelling up to Essex has continued to fill his time with watercolour painting, walking, fishing, organising reunions for ex London Life staff and being on the With Profits Committee for the Phoenix Group of companies. He also continues to play a very active part as a Trustee, Vice President and a number of other roles for his old school former pupils society. At the start of the year, not knowing what was going to unfold, he also volunteered to become treasurer of a local community based charity and this has taken up a considerable amount of his time.

Chris and Eryl were due to celebrate their 30<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in June this year in America, but this had to be cancelled. Instead they went away on a cruise from Southampton to San Francisco in late September/October and met up with some old friends on arrival. A trip with the whole family is being planned for next year.

That's about it except to wish you a very Merry Christmas and happy New Year. Chris and his sister and our respective families have always spent Christmas together at his father's so this Christmas is going to be very different. We have all booked to stay at a small hotel in Sussex for 4 nights and we will be the only guests there. We just hope that Chris's sister's husband, Ian, will be well enough to go away, as he's currently being treated for liver failure. What a year its been!!

Chris, Eryl, Stephanie, Samantha and Michael Essex

3 Kingston Avenue, Saltford, Bristol, BS31 3LF

[essexes@aol.com](mailto:essexes@aol.com)